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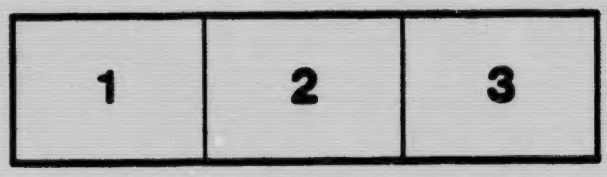

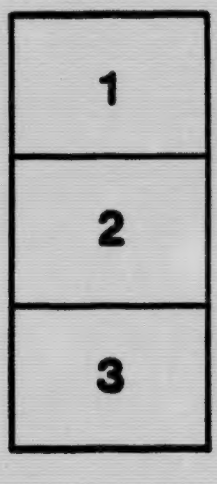

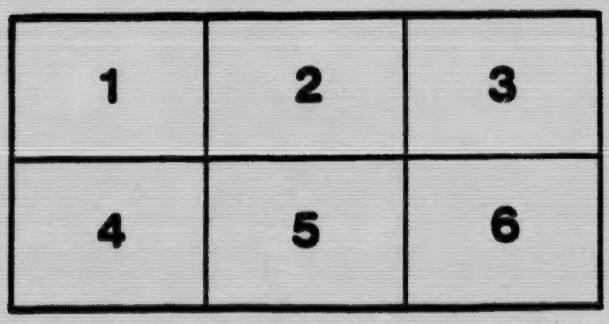

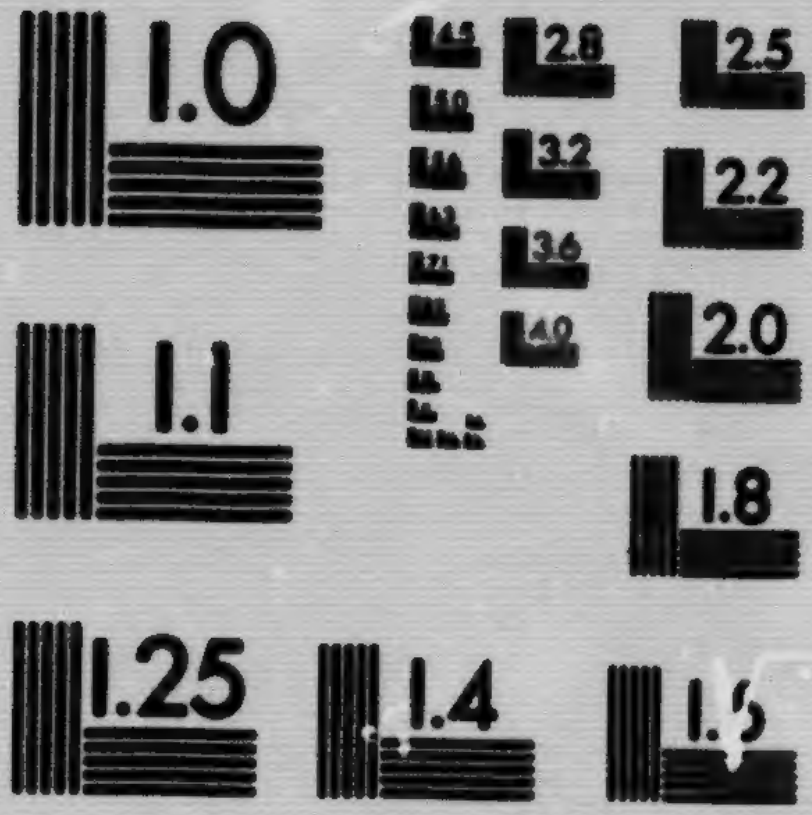

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14

SPEAKERS' PATRIOTIC LEAGUE

FINAL REPORT

OF THE

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JANUARY, 1919

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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JANUARY 1919

The Annual Meeting of the League is usually held in the Spring but this year it had been determined to hold it in November. With the unexpected close of the war in that month, your Executive Committee decided to postpone still further the Annual Meeting till after the New Year, and after due consideration, have now decided to recommend to the members that the League be dissolved, and a motion to that effect will be submitted for your approval.

Your Executive Committee in presenting the Final Report of the Speakers' Patriotic League deems it not inappropriate to review the work accomplished by the League since its organization and to recall some of the aims, objects and vital principles underlying its organization.

The Speakers' Patriotic League was formed at a meeting of a number of men prominent in military and patriotic work, held at Government House, on March 2nd, 1915, upon the invitation of Sir John Hendrie, who, as President of the League, has taken throughout its existence an active interest in its operations.

The individual efforts of some of its promoters in holding patriotic meetings in the rural parts of Ontario, had shown them the need of some concerted action, not merely to supply speakers for stimulating recruiting and other forms of patriotic efforts, but to properly organize the various municipalities and communities so that public meetings should be held not as an end in themselves but with some direct practical purpose in view. It was this insistence on proper organization as a condition to the supply of speakers for public meetings, that has given the key-note to our action and has proved to be the strength of the League.

At the first meeting of the League in 1915, a memorandum was issued in which the purposes of the organization were set forth substantially as follows:

> "To educate public opinion throughout the country as to the pressing needs of the Empire for men and money; to co-ordinate and stimulate all the various activities working to this end and to augment the various patriotic funds without, however, establishing any fund of its own. Campaigns will be carried on as the needs of the military and relief situation dictate, it being understood that whenever the recruiting of men for overseas service, or the raising of funds for patriotic and relief purposes appear to be lagging in any particular district those enrolled in the Speakers' Patriotic League should be available for promoting the organization of local committees to carry on this work and to provide speakers to address meetings for the purposes of arousing the public of such districts and for securing an adequate response."

The whole scheme was endorsed at a public meeting held on March 25th, 1915, at which meeting officers were elected and the League commenced active operations the following month.

From that time until the close of the war the purpose above outlined has been consistently followed, and on the lines above indicated the League has afforded assistance to recruiting, to the Patriotic Fund, to the British and Canadian Red Cross Funds, Belgian Relief, to War Loan and Food Campaigns, etc., and has served as a central bureau for supplying them all with speakers and organizers.

From the first every effort was made to organize those districts which stood in need of organization and to assist in the formation in as many centres as possible of committees of citizens for patriotic endeavour. No request for assistance that the League could render has been refused, where it was physically possible to supply it, and while the most of our work was done in Military District No. 2, speakers have gone to all points of Ontario, and to many places in the United States.

Our first work was mainly in connection with patriotic funds, and it was not till July 1915 that the work of recruiting was actively taken up. Recruiting campaigns were organized in some rural communities, names of eligible men were obtained and a personal canvass of them made. Whilst these campaigns were productive of good results in enlistments, probably the most valuable result was the information which it gave us as to the exact state of mind which existed in different parts of the country. The information secured was at once utilised, and the first public result of this was the recruiting meeting called by us July 22nd, 1915, at Massey Hall and held under the auspices of General Logie and the commanding officers of the local battalions. The success of the meeting was tremendous and unexpected, not only was Massey Hall filled but it was reported that at least 10,000 people gathered in front of the City Hall in the overflow meeting.

This meeting resulted in the formation of the Central Recruiting Committee in November 1915, the League undertaking all the office and organization work in connection with it.

With the formation of the Central Recruiting Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. John M. Godfrey, began the active recruiting work throughout this Division which continued with such conspicuous success for almost two years. The authorisation of the formation of county battalions in the fall of 1915 led to general activity throughout the whole Division and the League was called upon to organize local committees and to supply speakers for recruiting meetings and this resulted in the engagement by the League of returned soldiers, who were trained to address these meetings.

Lieut.-Col. Williams, upon his appointment as Chief Recruiting Officer for this Division, at once made use of the Local Committees of the League, and added others in many places.

The significant element of this was the definite recognition by the military authorities of the part which civilian organizations should take in recruiting.

That the work of the League was eminently successful as evidenced by the large number of men who recruited from this district, and the many expressions of thanks received from Lieut.-Col. George H. Williams and other military authorities in charge of recruiting, as well as the acknowledgments from the various patriotic funds for assistance given.

Between May 1915 and May 1916, the League supplied speakers for and aided in the organization of 980 public meetings, including those held for general patriotic purposes, recruiting, and on behalf of the Canadian Patriotic and Red Cross Funds.

A total of approximately $1,500,000 was raised for the two above-mentioned funds through local committees as a result of the League's endeavour.

By the time of our Annual Meeting in June 1916, recruiting throughout Canada began to shew a marked decrease, and it was felt by the members of the League who had been associated with the holding of a thousand meetings throughout the Province of Ontario, and had come in close contact with the feelings and attitude of the people, that the League would be justified in presenting to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, its confident assurance that the people would stand behind the Government in any plan which would be evolved, whether under the Militia Act or the Defence of the Realm Act or otherwise, as might seem most advantageous for the more complete and effectual mobilisation of the entire resources of our country, in men and materials for the successful prosecution of the war and a resolution to this effect was unanimously passed at the Annual Meeting and sent to the Prime Minister of Canada.

During the year 1917, the demand for speakers for recruiting meetings were not so great. Voluntary recruiting ceased entirely in the summer of 1917 when the Military Service Act became law. The League, nevertheless, furnished speakers for 311 meetings, bringing the total of meetings, for which speakers were supplied in two years to 2073, and also distributed an enormous amount of literature and no less than 33,000 recruiting posters.

A great deal of attention was paid during the year to the procuring of grants from county and municipal councils in the Province of Ontario to the Patriotic and Red Cross Funds, and co-operating with and assisting in many ways the Ontario Organization of the Resources Committee, the Patriotic Fund, the Red Cross Fund, the National Service Board, Civilian Recruiting Committees and the military authorities.

During this year the League, through this executive, endeavoured in every practical way to press its views in support of Compulsory Military Service to secure the necessary reinforcements for our Army Corps, and to bring the views of the League before those responsible for the government of the country. And it might well feel that its efforts, in some measure at least, contributed to bringing about Compulsory Military Service.

At the Annual Meeting held on June 25th, 1917, the following resolution was adopted:

"That this League reaffirms its belief as expressed in a Resolution passed at its last annual meeting that the people will stand behind the Government in any plan which may be evolved, whether under the Militia Act or otherwise as may seem most advantageous for the more complete and effectual mobilization of the entire resources of our country, in men and materials, for the successful prosecution of the war; and as a step essential to the carrying into effect of this policy, approves immediately of providing the necessary reinforcements for the Canadian Forces by selective compulsion."

The following further resolution was also adopted:

"Resolved that this League stands ready, and proposes to exercise its influence amongst its own members and also throughout the country to place the winning of the war and all steps contributing to that end above party political consideration and that the League will continue to actively promote and support all measures calculated to assure the successful prosecution of the war."

It was also decided at this meeting to encourage the holding of meetings designed to support selective compulsion for military and other purposes, supplying speakers as far as practicable when desired, and otherwise to assist in stimulating and promoting the effective expression of public opinion on the question.

From May 1917, to this date the League has actively continued its work, adhering to the same policy which it has pursued throughout, co-operating with other bodies organized for patriotic purposes and promoting patriotic sentiment and effort in Ontario, particularly throughout this military district.

During the year commencing May 1917, and ending March 1918, we furnished speakers for seventy-five meetings in connection with Canada's Victory Loan for forty-seven factory meetings, for the Red Cross and Patriotic Campaigns, for seventy-one theatre meetings and speakers for numerous other gatherings, including many calls from the United States for assistance in their patriotic and war campaigns.

During this period, a Press Sub-Committee of the Executive was also organized, whose duty it was to endeavour to influence public opinion through the medium of the daily newspapers by timely articles on subjects in which the League was interested, and whatever influence could be exerted in the way of advocating the formation of a non-party government (without taking part in a political election or engaging in any political activities) was exerted in favour of a Union Government.

Since the last Annual Meeting which took place in April, 1917, the League has supplied speakers for ten meetings, held on behalf of the Food Production and for four meetings on behalf of Liberty Loan Campaigns in various cities of the United States. Twelve speakers addressed about 150 meetings in connection with the American Red Cross Campaign in May 1918. In connection with these last-named meetings most of the speakers spent from one week to ten days, and addressed a large number of meetings, in one instance the speaker giving as many as thirty-two addresses.

During the summer there were a number of patriotic gatherings and Red Cross meetings for which speakers were supplied. From October 18th to November 15th, during the Victory Loan Campaign, speakers of the League addressed one hundred and two meetings, and from November 20th to January 15th, seven speakers have been sent by the League to address large patriotic gatherings in large cities of the Eastern States.

The Clerical Patriotic Association, since its organization in July 1916, has co-operated most heartily in every way with the Speakers' Patriotic League. In order to lessen the cost of maintenance they have made use of our office and staff, and contributed regularly to the expenses.

The work accomplished by the League in the four years of its existence may be briefly summarized by stating, that in addition to organizing a large number of local committees in this military district for patriotic work (and by means of which a very large amount of money was raised and a large number of men voluntarily enlisted) speakers have been supplied for more than 2,700 meetings, and a great deal of information has been circulated through the press of the Province and by means of circulars, etc. The total expenses have amounted to a little over $9,500, all of which has been contributed by the members of the League. This small cost for four years' work was made possible by the fact that our speakers, with the exception of a few returned men, gave their services voluntarily. In view of the results obtained, your executive thinks the League may well feel satisfied that the money has been well spent, and that the League has fully justified its existence.

No one can recognize more fully than your executive, that whatever success the League has had, is due entirely to the generous and unselfish devotion of the speakers who have made the League's existence and work possible. To them must be given full credit for the results achieved, and hearty appreciation for their voluntary work, which, in most cases, meant no small sacrifice on their part.

Our thanks are also due to those who contributed written articles on patriotic subjects from time to time. These articles received a large circulation through the newspapers of the Province, and assisted materially in educating public opinion on broad lines.

Your committee also desires to take this opportunity of recording their thanks to Miss A. A. Arnott who, from the commencement of the work to its finish, has been in charge of the office, and has at all times shown herself thoroughly competent to carry on the work, and always anxious and willing to forward its interests. We are glad to know that the Repatriation Committee has secured Miss Arnott's services, and the good wishes of the League go with her in her new work.

Our thanks are also due to those who contributed written articles on patriotic subjects from time to time. These articles received a large circulation through the newspapers of the Province, and assisted materially in educating public opinion on broad lines.

FINANCES.—Owing to the various causes mentioned in the report the expenses of the League for the past year have consisted practically of disbursements for secretarial work, and in consequence it has not been necessary to make a general call upon our many friends for support by way of subscriptions, although in this connection we wish to acknowledge the receipt of $380 by way of voluntary contributions. We also wish to mention that the Recruiting Organization of the County of Ontario has recognized the claim which we made upon them for services during 1915, referred to as outstanding in our previous report, and in this connection we received a cheque for $400. The Counties of Dufferin and Haldimand have been afforded an opportunity to recognize the claim for the expenditure the League incurred in connection with recruiting campaigns carried out at the request of the Recruiting Organizations in those counties, but they have so far failed to respond. Various expenses were incurred in connection with speakers on behalf of the two Victory Loan Campaigns, and our disbursements in this connection, amounting to $829.16, have been paid from the Campaign funds. We are left with certain assets of a realizable character which will be disposed of, and which will provide sufficient funds to discharge all indebtedness.

We desire to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which we owe to all the friends who have so liberally supported the League during the term of its existence, for had it not been for their help and assistance, a great deal of valuable work would have remained undone.

We have again to acknowledge our indebtedness to the University authorities for the accommodation which they accorded us in the University buildings, free of rent, for a period of four years.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

From 1st May, 1917 to 30th January, 1919

(21 months).

RECEIPTS.

Subscriptions received	$2,015.02
Speakers' Expenses *re* St. Catharines, May 1917	11.10
Speakers' Expenses *re* St. Catharines, May 1917	30.05
Speakers' Expenses *re* Windsor, May 1917	28.55
Rental of Pathescope and Films	114.82
Honour Rolls Sold	57.24
Posters Sold	44.45
Refund of Expenses, Victory Loan Campaign, 1917	477.71
Refund of Expenses, Victory Loan Campaign, 1918	351.45
Cheque from 182nd Battalion, Settlement of Recruiting Account, County of Ontario	400.00
Clerical Patriotic Association, share of office expenses	350.00
	$3,880.39

DISBURSEMENTS.

Balance overdraft 30th April, 1917	$451.10	
Speakers' expenses, 1917	29.80	
Office salaries	1,716.50	
Petty cash, including postage	99.94	
Stationery and sundries	68.37	
Rental of typewriter	56.50	
Telephone and telegrams	82.80	
Annual Meeting, 1917—newspaper notices, printing reports for 1917 and 1918	68.96	
Distributing circulars to press in Ontario, etc	106.13	
Pathescope Company, rental of films	86.57	
Closing account of Central Recruiting Fund at Standard Bank	322.30	
Expenses *re* Victory Loan Campaign, 1917	477.06	
Expenses *re* Victory Loan Campaign, 1918	351.45	
		$3,917.57
Debit balance as at 31st January, 1919		$37.13

Before closing this report, we wish to record the League's indebtedness to the late Colonel Sweny, one of the Vice-Presidents, and to the late Mr. G. P. Scholfield, the first Honorary Treasurer, both of whom took an active part in the formation of the League and in the work of conducting its affairs until the close of their lives.

Submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee,

C. A. MASTEN,
Chairman.

T. CRAWFORD BROWN,
Hon. Secretary.

7th February, 1919.

GENERAL MEETING OF THE SPEAKERS' PATRIOTIC LEAGUE.

The General Meeting of the League called to receive the report of the Executive Committee and to consider other business, was held at the Parliament Buildings, Toronto, on the 7th February, 1919.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor Sir John S. Hendrie, President of the League, took the chair, and Major (Rev.) T. Crawford Brown acted as Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Masten, Chairman, presented the report of the Executive Committee. The report which is printed herewith, gave the details of the work done by the League since the last report and a resumé of the work since the formation of the League in March 1915. In moving the adoption of the report, Judge Masten referred to the continuous support received from His Honour the President, and to the fact that he had induced His Excellency, the Governor-General, to become a patron of the League, which had

contributed greatly to its prestige and facilitated its work. He further stated that the Executive, before deciding to recommend the disbanding of the League had very carefully considered the question of continuing its activities. In view of the fact that the League had been organized for a definite purpose, and that purpose had been realized to a great extent, it was thought advisable that the League under its present formation should be disbanded, but that the Executive fully realized that there were many great and serious problems still pressing for solution, and further, that a great majority of those who had taken an active part in the League's work in the past, would be equally willing and anxious to assist in work of a like kind in the future.

Mr. A. H. Campbell, in seconding the motion, emphasized the debt the League was under to the speakers who had, during the past four years, done such valuable work through the Province at great personal sacrifice to themselves. Mr. H. V. F. Jones, the Hon. Treasurer, pointed out that the whole expenses for four years, had amounted to less than $10,000, and felt that the members of the League might well feel satisfied that so much had been accomplished in giving assistance in recruiting, and raising money for patriotic purposes, at such a small cost.

Professor Kiersted of McMaster University, expressed regret at the decision of the Executive in recommending the League to dissolve. He felt that its success in the past had revealed the need of such an organization; that critical days were ahead of us, and that the League should continue to act in assisting the solution of after-the-war problems.

Major G. A. Sampson, a returned officer, also stated that he thought the organization should be continued and that distinctly Governmental organizations could very seldom influence public thought in the same way as a voluntary organization could. The Great War Veterans' Association, he stated, needed the help of deep thinking men.

Major Crawford Brown read a letter from Colonel McCulloch of Hamilton suggesting that the League would be able to do more good, by co-operating heartily with the Official Repatriation Committee in a purely voluntary way, than by dissolving.

Mr. N. F. Davidson stated that as one who had much to do with the formation of the League, and as a member from the first, of its Executive Committee, he had been a most reluctant convert to the necessity of the dissolution of the League as such. It was really because of the new and altered work now confronting us, so well outlined by Prof. Kiersted and Major Sampson, and the practical certainty that the problems of the immediate future must be quite largely "political", that they were forced to realize that this League, honoured by the patronage of the Governor-General, presided over by the Lieutenant-Governor and with a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario as its Chairman, must now, with the close of hostilities and the end of its definite work, cease to exist. It was equally impossible for the League thus officered to present and discuss in a fearless manner the pressing problems of the future, or, on the other hand, to continue to use for a changed purpose,

however commendable, the name which had been so long and so closely associated with the names of these officers, and which had been adopted for a distinctively non-political war effort. He desired, however, to add that he agreed absolutely with the two preceding speakers, that the most vital problems now confronting the community would be best dealt with through voluntary rather than through official or governmental organizations, but he added that the men who have worked together so long and so zealously may surely be relied upon to continue their efforts as need arises and in close association.

The Chairman, before putting the motion, stated that in his opinion, while hearing with much interest the remarks which had been made, thought that it would be better for the League to dissolve and that later, if considered advisable, a new organization could be formed on similar lines for the purpose of assisting in the solution of the many peace problems which were bound to arise.

After some further discussion, it was resolved that the report of the Executive be now received and adopted and that copies of the report be sent to each member of the League.

Colonel Noel Marshall, chairman of the Council of the Canadian Red Cross, said that he had come to the meeting in order to acknowledge the splendid assistance rendered to their Society by the League and took this opportunity of expressing the thanks of the Canadian Red Cross Society for the work of the League throughout the Province.

Mr. Jno. A. Paterson, K.C., stated that while we all understood that the Speakers' Patriotic League in name had finished its work, that the spirit of its members was vital, and that they were prepared to do any work which they were physically capable of doing, when called upon. He then moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the purposes for which the Speakers' Patriotic League was organized have now been fulfilled.

AND WHEREAS the Executive Committee have by their Report recommended that the activities of the League as such do now cease, which report has been received and adopted.

BE IT RESOLVED that in pursuance of such recommendation the Speakers' Patriotic League do now cease further operations, and that the Executive Committee be instructed and empowered to dispose of its assets as in their discretion may appear best, pay any outstanding obligations of the League, and generally take all steps necessary or desirable to dissolve.

The motion was seconded by Mr. R. B. Henderson, and carried unanimously.

Mr. J. G. O'Donohue, in moving a vote of thanks to the President, spoke of the inspiration which His Honour's connection had been, and for the assistance which he had at all times rendered.

After thanking the meeting for the vote of thanks, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned.